

"higher criticism" instead of the seldom-used phrase "lower criticism."

If one could hear Dean Shera's own lectures, and then browse in this book to recall or supplement what he said, one would have an excellent new unit in the curriculum. But as a general work that might explain librarianship to historians and historiography to librarians, it suffers from having attempted to survey too much. Ideas are present, combative ideas, on every page, but the reader must fill in the pages with more knowledge of philosophy and sociology, as well as history, than the typical library school student possesses.—*Allen T. Hazen, Columbia University.*

## What Shall I Read Next?

*What Shall I Read Next? A Personal Selection of 20th Century Books.* By F. Seymour Smith. [New York] Cambridge University Press. Published for the National Book League. 1953. 232 pp. \$2.00.

Mr. Smith's earlier book-lists, always unpretentious and always useful for quick refer-

ence or for general guidance, include *The Classics in Translation* (1930), some briefer guides like *Reading History* (1950), and *An English Library* (1943). To the last-named list Mr. Smith has now in some sense furnished a sequel (his word is complement), *not* a parallel volume: the *English Library* is a conventional recording of the classics in all fields, with concise introductory comments and almost no individual annotation, to make a list of books readily recognizable as classics by any reader; and it is a list not readily available elsewhere in any such concise form. By its nature the *English Library* is unexciting and impersonal ("... all those books which have come to be regarded as English classics"), but by its nature it is useful.

The sequel, *What Shall I Read Next*, is by its nature more personal, and by that very quality more attractive. No reader can be excited by finding Gibbon in the earlier list; but one can be pleased to read, for example, in the new book that Geoffrey Gorer's *Americans* is "a study in national character written with wit but no malice; with penetration and

## 1955 ACRL BUILDINGS INSTITUTE

As a pre-conference activity of the 1955 Midwinter ALA meeting, an *ACRL Library Building Plans Institute* is tentatively being programmed for January 28-29. If you would care to present the plans of your proposed building at this Institute, please write to David Jolly, Chairman, ACRL Buildings Committee, Deering Library, Evanston, Ill.

If you wish to attend as a participant, please send your check in the amount of \$5.00 to the above address by November 15. *Registrations will be limited to 75.*

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insight, but no smugness." This more personal selection and annotation, quite naturally, produces not only more excitement but also more disagreement. Here is no list of "those books which have come to be regarded," but a list of some "of the books that deserve a reading" from recent years.

Most readers will be disappointed here and there, by the inclusion of novels that scarcely deserve a reading, by the omission of works that seem much more certainly to deserve a reading, and by the occasional tendency to fall back upon bromides like "generally considered," "considered by American writers to be indispensable," and "a standard American work." And the point of view of the author is frequently left obscure by Mr. Smith, even when it could have been cited to explain the attraction of the book listed. But such imperfections may do little damage: omissions can be rectified from other sources, and no reader is required to read every book Mr. Smith includes. *What Shall I Read Next* is a usable guide and it includes personal and useful guidance. The dominant tone is set by phrases like "among the six greatest novels which came out of the European War of 1914-1918" and "may be strongly recommended for a train journey"—these two in the section on Novels; or "the most useful official publication ever issued by H.M.S.O." and "of the many (perhaps too many) books on the poet this is one of the best."

Because the *English Library* excluded only

the works of authors still living in 1943, some slight confusion is unavoidable: Conrad, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Charles Williams, Virginia Woolf, and Yeats, among many, do not appear with their contemporaries in the new book, having been installed as classics in 1943. With hindsight one can now suggest that the earlier book might well have stopped at 1900 or 1918. But Mr. Smith does what he can to rectify matters by naming at the end of each section those recent authors who must be looked for in the *English Library*.

One can say with confidence that this book will not replace other books of ready reference, it will not become the classic guide of our age, and it will not be an infallible guide on any topic or book. But if used properly, by an inquiring reader who reads with judgment but without expert knowledge, this will be a repeatedly stimulating and reliable reader's adviser to answer the question propounded in its title.

A pleasant reminder of England's recovery from certain of the wartime privations is furnished by the book's appearance. Indeed of the "war economy standard" paper and the crowded grey type that almost make one dizzy, in the *English Library*, the new book is successfully designed by Mr. Crutchley at Cambridge to be both easy and pleasant to read, and it is printed on good paper. To utility, therefore, Cambridge is again able to add quality in popular book production.—Allen T. Hazen, *Columbia University*.

## Reprints Available

Readers are reminded of the current availability of three important bibliographical works which have been out-of-print until recently. These are the *Checklist of United States Public Documents 1789-1909* (\$16.30), the *Comprehensive Index to the Publications of the United States Government 1881-1893* (\$41.60) and *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Government Publications of the United States—September 5, 1774 to March 4, 1881* (\$14.40). While all three are expensive they are very large volumes which presented many reprinting problems and the sale price is not out of line with their manufacturing cost and importance. The volumes were reprinted by J. W. Edwards, Publisher, Inc. of Ann Arbor, Michigan, at the request of a joint committee of the ACRL Reference Section and ARL. These volumes are well known to every library school graduate and their importance to college libraries does not need to be emphasized. They will not be immediately reprinted when the present small supply is exhausted.

Arthur T. Hamlin